

AGM Minutes
Friday 10th February 2017
East Grinstead Sports Club 17.30-19.30

Present:

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| Sir Nicholas Soames | Norman Webster, EGTC |
| Ginny Heard | Peter Wyan, MSDC |
| Stuart Scholes, ex CEO | Chris Sowerby, Business Doctors |
| Roger Martell, Treasurer | Margaret Belsey, MSDC |
| Lee Farren, interim CEO | Edward Belsey, Golf Guard |
| Kate Bennett, EGBA | Chris McGloin, McGloin Services Ltd |
| Fiona Humphreys, EGBA | Pru Oliver, Meridian FM Radio |
| Dick Sweatman, Councillor | Bob Mainstone, EGTC |
| Elaine McGloin, Age UK / McGloin Services Ltd | Nick Blythe, Paella Fella |
| Peter Robinson, Robinson Elliott Surveyors | Judy Theobald, Knighthood |
| Rex Whittaker, RJWT | Julia Searle, JS Global Services Ltd |
| Geoff Border, EG Cricket Club | Margaret Martell, Martell's |
| Fiona Bewers, The Caravan Club | Dawn Spalding, EG Promotions Manager |
| Jonathan Ash-Edwards, MSDC | Martin Robinson, Girl Guiding, Blacklands Farm |
| Jacquie Russell, EG Town Council | |
| Bob Russell, IQ Projects | |

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| 1. | <p>Apologies: Apologies were received from Caroll Everest, Margaret & Philip De Jong, Charmaine & John Hallmark, James Moore, Matt Cole, Sue Todd, Oliver Harwood, Neville Walker, Pam Mitchell, Elizabeth Gill. Stuart Scholes, CEO, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Last year's minutes were approved – proposed by Bob Russell, seconded by Judy Theobald.</p> |
| 2. | <p>Chairman's Address: Sir Nicholas Soames thanked Stuart Scholes for all his efforts and for continuing to encourage people to network in the town. He admitted that getting folk along to meetings and taking part in things could be a thankless task. He applauded the new newsletter and said that he would share pertinent news as and when it became available. Sir Nicholas talked about the challenges Brexit would bring but said that it was important to move forward and to give everyone certainty. The economy is doing well, mostly due to our strong consumer economy and low interest rates. He warned that the trade agreements required post Brexit were extremely complex and would take many years to negotiate, two years would simply not be long enough. Looking at the local scenario, he said that MSDC had been doing a great job trying to manage the demand for more housing. He accepted that the real problem was infrastructure to go with the growth in population. He said that there was a real risk that Mid Sussex could get choked by its own success. Bob Russell asked Sir Nicholas how trade deals were negotiated. Sir Nicholas explained the complexity he encountered whilst being Minister for Agriculture. He talked to Margaret Belsey about the insurance market in Europe. Bob Mainstone raised the frustrations involved in moving the Neighbourhood Plan forward now that it had been approved. Everyone accepts that we need more houses, the question will be where and whether the infrastructure will be there to cope with it. Sir Nicholas said that the Government is working to give more weight to Neighbourhood Plans and to make sure that developers do not undermine them. Norman Webster raised the issue of skills shortage. Sir Nicholas said that we live in an area with very low unemployment rates and a severe lack of skills and British citizens willing to do some of the jobs required to build houses and infrastructure. We suffer from too much commuting. Sir Nicholas invited Stuart Scholes to write on the issue of the lack of office space in the town. Sir Nicholas thanked all of the EGBA committee for their work, the work of District Councillors and Town Councillors. Sir Nicholas left the meeting as he had further engagements.</p> |

| 3. | <p>Treasurer’s report</p> <p>Copies of the last year’s accounts were distributed. Roger Martell thanked Derek Field for checking them. Roger said that there had been a slight loss in the year, due to a drop in subs but also pointed out that the grant from MSDC had come through this year rather than last year as expected.</p> <p>There were no questions about the accounts and they were duly agreed – proposed by Fiona Bewers and seconded by Margaret Belsey.</p> <p>Stuart Scholes thanked Roger for his work as Treasurer.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| 4. | <p>CEO position</p> <p>Stuart Scholes said that he would be standing down and that the committee had been looking for a replacement. There are several strong candidates but none available immediately. The committee’s recommendation was that we should have an interim CEO – Lee Farren.</p> <p>Lee said that he was delighted to act as Interim CEO as he had been an active committee member for a number of years and had worked closely with the likes of East Grinstead Museum and Visit East Grinstead. He explained that we needed to ratify a new constitution (circulated to all members on Friday 3rd February) in order that we could work with Paypal. At present we are in limbo because we need a constitution in order to be properly recognised as an entity.</p> <p>A show of hands registered that everyone in the room was in favour of the new constitution and it was then proposed by Fiona Bewers and seconded by Kate Bennett.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4. | <p>Re-election of Committee Members</p> <p>The new constitution allows for up to 8 committee members.</p> <p>Five members volunteered to stand again and were duly re-elected and two new members were elected:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="310 932 1456 1203"> <thead> <tr> <th>Member</th> <th>Proposed</th> <th>Seconded</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Elaine McGloin (existing)</td> <td>Fiona Bewers</td> <td>Bob Russell</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fiona Bewers (existing)</td> <td>Stuart Scholes</td> <td>Judy Theobald</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bob Russell (existing)</td> <td>Fiona Bewers</td> <td>Edward Belsey</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Barney Durrant (existing)</td> <td>Stuart Scholes</td> <td>Fiona Bewers</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Matt Cole (existing)</td> <td>Bob Russell</td> <td>Peter Robinson</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Judy Theobald (new)</td> <td>Fiona Bewers</td> <td>Nick Blythe</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rex Whittaker (new)</td> <td>Margaret Belsey</td> <td>Edward Belsey</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Member | Proposed | Seconded | Elaine McGloin (existing) | Fiona Bewers | Bob Russell | Fiona Bewers (existing) | Stuart Scholes | Judy Theobald | Bob Russell (existing) | Fiona Bewers | Edward Belsey | Barney Durrant (existing) | Stuart Scholes | Fiona Bewers | Matt Cole (existing) | Bob Russell | Peter Robinson | Judy Theobald (new) | Fiona Bewers | Nick Blythe | Rex Whittaker (new) | Margaret Belsey | Edward Belsey |
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| Elaine McGloin (existing) | Fiona Bewers | Bob Russell | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Fiona Bewers (existing) | Stuart Scholes | Judy Theobald | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bob Russell (existing) | Fiona Bewers | Edward Belsey | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Barney Durrant (existing) | Stuart Scholes | Fiona Bewers | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Rex Whittaker (new) | Margaret Belsey | Edward Belsey | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5. | <p>Reappointment of Officers</p> <p>Interim CEO, Lee Farren Treasurer, Roger Martell Kate Bennett, Business Manager Fiona Humphreys, Marketing Administrator</p> <p>All were re-appointed – proposed by Bob Russell and seconded by Fiona Bewers.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6. | <p>Review of 2016</p> <p>Stuart Scholes said that our events, generally two per month, were well attended and would be continued.</p> <p>He was happy with the format of the new newsletters and felt that they were more effective.</p> <p>The “Meet & Greet” initiative had not been as successful as in previous years due to a lack of volunteers. He hoped that it could be revitalised.</p> <p>Stuart hoped that members would utilise Meridian FM Radio’s Friday business slot.</p> <p>Stuart said that the signage had been improved at the station as the previous one did not help visitors to find the High Street.</p> <p>He said that the Visit East Grinstead website was now looking really good and he thanked Dawn Spalding for her work on this. He encouraged members to feed information to Dawn so that it could be shared.</p> <p>He thanked MSDC for their technology grant in 2016, which had been used to rebuild the EGBA website.</p> <p>He thanked Barney Durrant for running a social media workshop for members.</p> <p>Stuart said that he would continue to work with Kingscote Valley to promote tourism in the area.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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| | <p>Ideally, we would like to see 50 new members to join the association in order that we can break even. The 2nd annual lecture, delivered by Kevin Byrne CEO of Checkatrade, had been excellent although it could have been better attended.</p> <p>EGBA would continue to support the Young Enterprise Scheme and Stuart thanked Kate Bennett for acting as a judge.</p> <p>Stuart said that he would have liked to have changed the name of the pub near the museum to The Guinea Pig but the new owners had not be interested enough to see this initiative through.</p> |
| <p>7.</p> | <p>The Year Ahead</p> <p>Lee said that he had originally joined EGBA so that he could network with other small businesses in the area and had found the experience invaluable. He had gained many digital clients and said that Google was a new and important “religion”. It is more vital than ever that businesses utilise digital channels. He thanked Roger for embracing the new technology that we are using including Paypal. He urged members to feed in ideas so that we could develop our systems to suit their needs. Lee thanked Sir Nicholas for his support and for Stuart, who would be acting as an important mentor over the next few months.</p> |
| <p>8.</p> | <p>AOB</p> <p>Rex Whittaker asked what the latest was regarding the development of Queen’s Walk and the new Travel Lodge. Roger Martell explained what he was doing with the Whitehall building and said that he was awaiting planning consent to complete the conversion. Jonathan Ash-Edwards said that the Queen’s Walk development would take a long time, maybe 2-3 years to come to fruition.</p> <p>Kate urged members to attend networking events and said that she hoped to see people at La Farola on Monday evening.</p> <p>Stuart said that he had had a great deal of fun as CEO of the association. He said that East Grinstead was a great small town and that we should all be very grateful to call it home.</p> <p>Stuart thanked Roger for all his support over the last 6 years and Kate who had joined within a few months of him.</p> <p>He thanked Caroll Everest for her efforts and said that the association was fortunate to have recruited Fiona Humphreys.</p> <p>Stuart wished the association would grow from strength to strength.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 7.30pm.</p> |